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NSC BRIEFING

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(Incomplete)
25X1

14 January 1958

SPUTNIK (POLITICAL)

- I. Soviets appear well satisfied with impact produced thus far by ICBM and Sputniks. They may believe that no further demonstrations of technological advances at this time, except a successful effort to reach the moon by rocket, are likely to rival the combined impact of ICBM and two earth satellites.
- A. Soviet leaders have exhibited considerable adroitness and restraint in seeking to translate scientific achievements into political gains and have stopped short of open intimidation of the free world.
1. They are confident that impact has already produced important political consequences favorable to Soviet aims: increased interest in new Summit talks prior to final decisions regarding stationing of US missiles and nuclear weapons stockpiles in NATO countries; increased interest in schemes pointing toward neutralism and disengagement.
 2. Soviets may see little political advantage in launching more satellites of same type as first two. They may plan to defer orbiting of vehicle of improved and heavier design until, or just before, US launches its first satellite. Khrushchev told [REDACTED] that "if necessary, we can double the weight" of second sputnik.

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II. In public statements, Khrushchev has taken line that Soviet satellite program is progressing according to plan, that USSR has mastered all technical problems. He has implied, at least, that further launchings will be postponed until results of first two sputniks have been thoroughly studied.

B. Same line taken by Bulganin

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25X1 [redacted] although one side or the other might gain a temporary lead in some particular field, this would not change the basic situation.

IV. Soviet leaders are confident they have established a commanding lead in missile race and that West will have great difficulty overcoming this advantage.

A. Soviet propaganda exploitation of ICBM and sputniks portrayed USSR as world leader in missile field, leaving US in position of catching up in science and technology.

1. Khrushchev told Supreme Soviet on 6 November: "Our country's achievement is of great importance because we win time in the competition with capitalist countries."
2. He told [redacted]: "USSR's lead in missile 25X1 race gives us the possibility to improve the production of rockets, to lead the US in this matter, and to accumulate the necessary stock of rockets if we do not come to terms on disarmament."

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